

Having positive conversations about meat & dairy

January 2020



Overview

AHDB has put together this pack of support materials to help positively manage the reputation of meat and dairy during January 2020 and beyond.

It includes a number of assets and materials that can be used throughout January, forming a common narrative for industry.

The pack includes

1. Market context
2. Insight – Plant-based diets
3. Background on Veganuary & the Media landscape for 2020
4. Summary of planned AHDB activity for January
5. Get involved – Social Media
6. Get involved – Meat & nutrition facts
7. Get involved – Dairy & nutrition facts
8. Get involved – Environment facts
9. Q&A Support – Health & nutrition
10. Q&A Support – Environment
11. Key contacts at AHDB



Market Context

82%

of UK households do not contain any "meat reducers"

(Kantar (52 w/e 11th August 2019 Diets of Britain Attribute)

95%

of Europeans would miss one or more animal products if they were no longer available to them

(Kantar /ING Survey of 12,000 Europeans)

According to Kantar Usage Data the actual percentage of British people who are strict vegans is only

0.6%

(which remains unchanged year-on-year)

(Kantar July 19, using food diaries)

94%

of UK households continue to buy meat, fish and poultry on a weekly basis (the same as last year)

(Kantar 2019)

99.8%

of UK households buy dairy products

(Kantar 52 w/e 11th August 2019)

Insight – Plant-based diets

The British Dietetic Association defines a plant-based diet as based on foods derived from plants, including vegetables, wholegrains, legumes, nuts, seeds and fruits, with few or no animal products.

Diets that limit or exclude meat, dairy products, and eggs used to be on the fringe, however publications on sustainable diets, such as the EAT-Lancet report and extensive media coverage around the environment and human health has moved plant-based into mainstream conversation.

Useful links

ahdb.org.uk/consumer-insight-plant-based-diets

ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/consumer-insight-consumer-focus-the-rise-of-plant-based-food-products-and-implications-for-meat-and-dairy



Background on Veganuary

Launched in the UK in January 2014, Veganuary encourages people to try going vegan for January (and beyond). Since the campaign started, more than 500,000 people have registered to try veganism. It mainly uses endorsements from celebrity actors and TV personalities, politicians and chefs to gain media attention and recognition for its cause. The campaign in the past has been highly active across social media.

January - Media landscape

In 2019, Veganuary was mostly dominated by the release of the EAT-Lancet report. Discussions therefore mostly centered on the environmental benefits of reducing red meat consumption.

There are however, two interesting things to note in the lead up to Veganuary 2020. Firstly, Joaquin Phoenix becomes the most-high profile celebrity to lend his support to the Veganuary campaign this year. Chris Packham is the highest profile member of this group from the UK with the rest relatively minor celebrities or influencers.

Secondly, Kate Fowler, a senior manager at the Veganuary campaign has warned plant-based diet followers not to hurt relatives feelings by rejecting non-vegan presents that offend them in an article for The Telegraph. She said that vegans should 'leave their megaphones at home' this Christmas and stop lecturing meat-eating friends, family and colleagues over the festive period. This marks a significant change in tone in how the campaign has previously been run.

**For a copy of the 2020 Veganuary press pack go to;
ahdb.org.uk/january-assets**

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/11/30/hold-tongue-tolerate-turkey-carving-vegans-offered-christmas/



Summary of planned AHDB activity

There are a number of proactive AHDB activities already planned throughout January to support the reputation of meat and dairy:

- ✓ National press and media interviews lined up with Spencer Matthews (meat and health)
- ✓ A new TV advert “pork - low in fat, high in protein” launching on Monday 13 January
- ✓ In store retail activity throughout January (pork on-pack stickers and recipe cards)
- ✓ Support from expert panel of independent health, nutrition and environment experts
- ✓ A new high impact social media video questioning fad diets produced for industry to share
- ✓ Advertorials, including the Daily Mail Online (the UK’s largest readership) ‘*7 Reasons why you SHOULDN’T cut meat from your diet*’
- ✓ ‘Meat, Health and Environment’ social media infographics available to share
- ✓ New UK dairy campaign to launch in February
- ✓ Supporting literature on nutrition, and AHDB’s ‘*Positive Conversations*’ podcast
- ✓ Continuous horizon scanning, media monitoring
- ✓ Members of the AHDB board will act as campaign spokespeople.

The AHDB Press & PR team will be monitoring press stories and media enquiries 7 days a week

Get involved

We've recommended some groups to follow. This way you can easily share and retweet any content and key messages across all social channels.

We would only recommend responding to conversations where we have sufficient research and evidence to make an informed contribution. A persuasive, comprehensive and evidence-based answer will limit any risk of further criticism.

Follow these Social Media Influencers and share their content



Frédéric Leroy, Professor of Food Science
[@fleroy1974](#)



Joe Stanley, UK beef farmer
[@JoeWStanley](#)



Frank M. Mitloehner, Animal science
[@GHGGuru](#)



Abi Reader, UK Dairy Farmer
[@AbiReader](#)

Follow AHDB and share our content throughout January (and beyond)



Instagram

[@love_pork](#)
[@simplybeefandlamb](#)
[@deptofdairyscrumptiousaffairs](#)



AHDB Twitter

[@TheAHDB](#) – Corporate account
[@AHDB_BeefLamb](#)
[@AHDB_Pork](#)
[@AHDB_Dairy](#)



Consumer facing Facebook

[facebook.com/lovepork.UK](#)
[facebook.com/simplybeefandlamb](#)
[facebook.com/TDDRA](#)



Industry facing Facebook

[facebook.com/TheAHDB](#) - Corporate account
[facebook.com/AHDBBeefandLamb](#)
[facebook.com/AHDBPork](#)

Meat & nutritional messaging

The key message is balance. Different food groups work best when consumed together in moderation as part of a balance plate approach. Beef, pork and lamb can play an important role in a healthy, balanced diet.

We have comprehensive guidance on nutrition and health claims regulations for beef, lamb and pork to help you understand what can be said about meat and health, and to support positive conversations.



Key facts:

- Red meat is **naturally rich in protein, low in salt** and provides a range of vitamins and minerals that contribute to good health, including **iron, potassium, zinc, vitamin B12 and niacin**
- Protein helps the maintenance of **normal bones** and **growth in muscle** mass
- Potassium contributes to normal muscle and **nerve function** and helps support **normal blood pressure**
- B vitamins can help with normal **energy** production in the body. They also help with the normal function of the **immune system, psychological function** and the **reduction of tiredness**
- Zinc supports normal **fertility and reproduction**
- Red meat is **low in salt** (sodium), reducing consumption of sodium supports the maintenance of normal blood pressure
- Our bodies absorb iron and zinc from meat **more readily than from plants**.

Get involved



AHDB has a bank of resources available to support the important role of red meat in a balanced diet. They can be found at ahdb.org.uk/january-assets



Dr Emma Derbyshire, Food Advisory Board

"We know that red meat is the richest and most readily absorbed source of iron and zinc in the British diet and a significant provider of protein. It delivers useful amounts of B vitamins, zinc and other important nutrients and can also be useful for weight management as it has a high protein content."

Dairy & nutritional messaging

As with meat, the key message with dairy is balance. Different food groups work best when consumed together in moderation as part of a balanced plate approach.

Milk and dairy foods are important sources of several nutrients which contribute to our positive well-being, including calcium, iodine and protein.

Key facts:

- A single glass of 200ml semi-skimmed milk provides **31%** of our daily recommended **calcium**
- Calcium also contributes **74%** of our **recommended intake of Vitamin B12**
- A 30g serving of hard cheese (for example Cheddar) gives us **15% of our daily recommended protein**
- A 150g pot of low-fat fruit yogurt provides **48%** of our **recommended daily intake of iodine**
- Calcium is needed for maintenance of **normal bones**, and helps **nerve and muscle function**.
- **Vitamin B12** helps to reduce tiredness & fatigue, and supports the normal function of the **immune system**
- **Protein** helps the maintenance of **normal bones** and **growth in muscle** mass
- **Iodine** contributes to the production of **thyroid hormones** and function.

Get involved

AHDB has a bank of resources available to support the important role of dairy in a balanced diet. They can be found at ahdb.org.uk/january-assets

There are also infographics available at www.tellitlikeitis.co.uk/infographics



Cattle, sheep & the environment

The UK remains one of the most sustainable places in the world to produce beef and lamb. Due to our weather and topography it requires very few inputs to produce nutrient dense, high quality food.

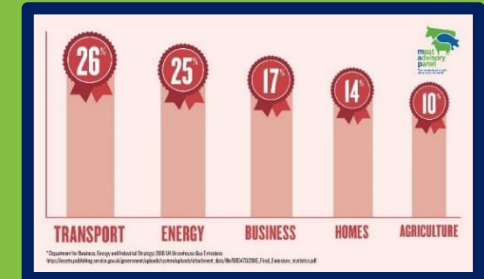
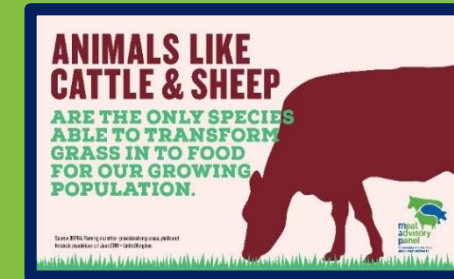
Key facts:

1. Latest DEFRA figures show UK agriculture is responsible for **10% of total UK emissions**, with livestock production making up just under half of that
2. Since 1990, UK agricultural **emissions have decreased by 16%** (DEFRA), whilst production has increased
3. Currently, **not all mitigating factors are taken into account** when assessing the impact of livestock production on the environment, painting livestock in an unfair negative light
4. Different methodologies are used to calculate carbon equivalents, meaning it is **difficult to make fair comparisons** across food types and industries
5. Just over **60% of UK agricultural land is grassland**, less suitable economically and environmentally for anything other than livestock grazing
6. These **grasslands capture and store carbon** from the atmosphere, provide a habitat for wildlife and aid biodiversity
7. Over **90% of beef and sheep feed is grass, silage and brewers grain** meaning the industry is not driving global soya production
8. In the UK only **67 litres of tap water** is required to produce per kg of beef, and **49 litres per kg of lamb**. The majority of the water comes from rain fed sources
9. UK beef and lamb carbon emissions are **35% lower** than the current global average, FAO 2016.

Get involved

AHDB

AHDB has a bank of resources available to spread the facts about livestock emissions and the role beef and lamb production plays in providing a sustainable diet. They can be found at ahdb.org.uk/january-assets



Professor Nigel Scollan Food Advisory Board

"Farming has the capacity to be both a source and store greenhouse gases (GHG). Recognising the importance of soil health there is much potential for farming to deliver carbon neutral systems by continued focus on reducing GHG and sequestering more carbon in our land, trees and grasslands."

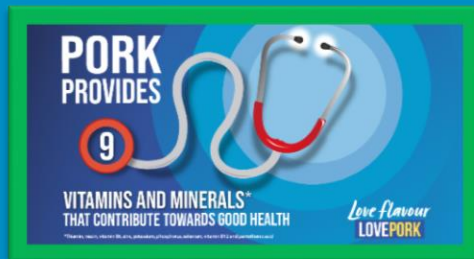
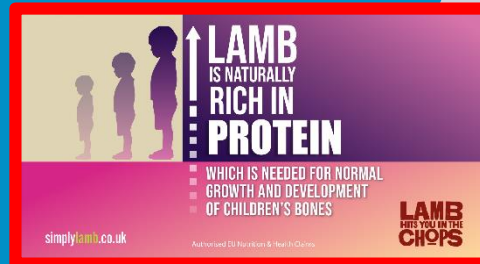
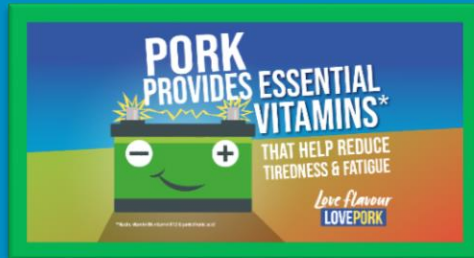
"The UK has further opportunity to be a global leader in farming systems, delivering nutrient rich foods, such as red meat, whilst simultaneously being carbon-neutral. Scientists and policymakers need to help farmers by developing tools to be able to accurately measure and audit how much carbon is stored in land."

Get involved

AHDB has a bank of resources available to spread the facts about red meats important role in a balanced diet. They can be found at

ahdb.org.uk/january-assets

And www.tellitlikeitis.co.uk/infographics (dairy only)



Q&A Support

Health and Nutrition



Q: What are your thoughts on EAT-Lancet's dietary guidelines, announced last January?

Reports like EAT-Lancet have strongly suggested global red meat consumption is reduced. Whilst there is scientific support for this report, it has also come under criticism. There is a question about the ability of populations to shift to such dietary recommendations, their wider public acceptability, the economic consequences of such a transition, and the problematic nature of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach replacing healthy traditional diets, which are part national cultural heritage and part social harmony. Some nutritionists have also expressed concern with regards ensuring nutrient adequacy.

It has also been argued that as well as meat/animal protein there are other environmental polluters, such as fossil fuels, industry and transport. In fact, while emissions of the entire agricultural sector (including livestock and aquaculture) account for 10% of the total emissions, those due to the use of fossil fuels represent a far more important 64%.

The EAT-Lancet report also sets the goal of “reducing food loss and waste by 50% to reduce pressure on food demand”. According to data provided by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) however, the worst waste worldwide is related to fruit, vegetables and tubers: with up to 45% of these fresh products being discarded annually. Immediately after fruit and vegetables come cereals (30% wasted) followed by fish and meat, whose waste accounts for 30% and 20% respectively.

Q: What are your views on veganism as a diet?

Choosing to exclude all animal products is a personal choice – it is not vital for good health. The majority of people in the UK include animal products like red meat and dairy, and these can be part of a healthy, balanced diet. We get a significant proportion of nutrients like iron and zinc from meat and meat products and we need more research on the long-term effects of a vegan diet on health in larger population groups. It's important that those considering a vegan diet make sure it's varied and balanced to ensure it provides all the nutrients needed, and to consider supplements and/or fortified foods to provide vitamin B12, which is generally only found naturally in animal foods. When looking at vegan or plant-based products it shouldn't be assumed that they are automatically a healthy choice – it's still important to check the label and avoid having those that are high in saturates, salt or added sugars too often.

Q: Is switching towards a more plant-based diet healthier for you?

Well-balanced plant based diets can provide the nutrients the body needs to be healthy.

There is some evidence that dietary patterns that include plenty of plant-based foods (but don't necessarily exclude meat/animal foods) have health benefits. A more plant-based diet is typically higher in fruit and vegetables, wholegrains and dietary fibre while being lower in saturated fat and added sugars. The evidence specifically for vegan diets and health is limited, although some evidence suggests a reduced risk of some diseases, such as cancer. However, nutrition experts will agree that people who follow more plant-based diets are often more health conscious overall and also adopt other healthier lifestyle factors. For instance, they are more likely to be physically active, have healthier weights, consume less alcohol, are less likely to smoke, as well as being more likely to have a higher income. This may explain some of the observed health benefits. In addition, not all plant-based diets are equal! Well-planned vegetarian and vegan diets can be nutritious and healthy, but it is also possible to follow a vegan diet badly. Foods that are suitable for vegans can also be high in saturated fat, salt and added sugars, such as deep fried foods, biscuits, crisps and confectionery.

Q: Is red meat unhealthy for you as it is high in fat?

Red meat is a source of protein, iron, vitamin B12, and zinc making it a nutritious food. Nowadays, the fat and saturated fat content of some lean cuts of red meat is lower than we may think. UK composition data shows that the average fat content of lean lamb is 8% while lean beef is 5% and lean pork can be less than 3%.

Q: Is red meat only important for you to help with your iron intake?

Red meat is one of the best sources of iron as our bodies can easily absorb it. Iron supports the formation of red blood cells, normal immune function and contributes to normal cognitive function. Currently a quarter of females aged 19 to 64 years in the UK have average iron intakes below what is adequate for most people. Red meat also contains many other important nutrients for optimal health, including protein, zinc, B vitamins including vitamin B12, selenium and also contributes some vitamin D.

Q: Would switching to a Flexitarian diet be better for the environment?

More research is needed to understand nutrition, diet and health in relation to sustainability and the environment. A flexitarian semi-vegetarian diet (SVD) is one that is primarily vegetarian with the occasional inclusion of meat or fish. It has also been argued that as well as meat/animal protein **there are other environmental** pollutants, such as fossil fuels, industry and transport. In fact, while emissions of the entire agricultural sector (including livestock and aquaculture) account for 10% of the total, those due to the use of fossil fuels represent a far more important 64%.

Q: What would happen if the world converted to veganism?

Well-balanced vegan diets can provide the nutrients the body needs to be healthy. However animal derived foods are typically important contributors to nutrients such as vitamin B12, iron and zinc in our UK diet. So if they are avoided it's important to ensure that these nutrients are provided by other dietary sources. We need more research on the potential long-term effects of a vegan diet on health in larger population groups. As yet it is unclear, and it's important to remember that not all plant-based diets are equal! Well-planned vegan diets can be nutritious and healthy, but it is also possible to follow a vegan diet badly.

Environmentally speaking, it is too soon to be able to say what the implications of completely stopping red meat consumption would be on the environment. Research is currently underway which looks at the extent of carbon neutrality when responsible and strategic grazing methods are used to produce red meat. The early results have been promising, demonstrating that managing livestock effectively can sequester tons of atmospheric carbon in soils. When it comes to the British countryside, a decline in livestock farming is also likely to have a large impact on the character and quality of the landscape, including impacting habitats and species.

Reports like EAT-Lancet have strongly suggested global red meat consumption is reduced. Whilst there is scientific support for this report, it has also come under criticism. There is a question about the ability of populations to shift to such dietary recommendations, their wider public acceptability, the economic consequences of such a transition, and the problematic nature of a one-size-fits-all' approach replacing healthy traditional diets which are part national cultural heritage and social harmony. Some nutritionists have also expressed concern with regards ensuring nutrient adequacy.

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Q&A Support

Environment

Q: What about the environmental impact of food groups involving livestock farming?

Ruminants are the only species able to transform marginal grasslands, which have few alternative uses, into food for the population. At a time when the population is increasing so dramatically, it is essential that livestock rearing continues, to ensure that land can be used effectively for growing crops and global food security is maintained.

Animals also play a vital role in growing crops effectively and sustainably, as manure enriches the soil with nutrients to help them grow. Without livestock we would increase our reliance on chemical fertilisers, which are produced by using non-renewable energy therefore, further contributing to our carbon footprint. Responsible and strategic livestock farming is a highly productive industry which produces a large amount of food for the population. When carried out effectively, carbon emissions can be minimised, with meat production playing an important role in global food security.

Q: Isn't livestock farming one of the most significant contributions to carbon emissions?

It has also been argued that as well as livestock there are other environmental polluters, such as fossil fuels, industry and transport. In fact, while emissions of the entire agricultural sector (including livestock and aquaculture) account for 10% of the total, those due to the use of fossil fuels represent a far more important 64%.

It is also important to make the distinction that carbon emissions from livestock farming vary across the globe and the UK is, in fact, a relatively sustainable place to produce meat.

Q: Will reducing the UK's red meat consumption not significantly improve our environmental impact?

Suggesting that people should stop or cut down on the amount of red meat they consume is not the answer to improving the UK's environmental impact and reducing carbon emissions. Arable and livestock farming are intrinsically linked. Animals play a vital role in growing crops effectively and sustainably, because animal manure is needed to enrich the soil with nutrients in order to help them grow.

Without livestock, we would increase our reliance on chemical fertilisers, which are produced by using non-renewable energy therefore, further contributing to our carbon footprint. 60% of the UK's agriculture land is marginal grassland, unsuitable for little else other than livestock grazing.

Q: If livestock farming can be sustainable, why do so many reputable sources recommend reducing consumption?

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It has also been argued that as well as meat/animal protein there are other environmental polluters, such as fossil fuels, industry and transport. In fact, while emissions of the entire agricultural sector (including livestock and aquaculture) account for 10% of the total, those due to the use of fossil fuels represent a far more important 64%.

The EAT-Lancet report also sets the goal of “reducing food loss and waste by 50% to reduce pressure on food demand”. According to data provided by FAO however, the worst waste worldwide is related to fruit, vegetables and tubers: with up to 45% of these fresh products being discarded annually. Immediately after fruit and vegetables come cereals (30% wasted) followed by fish and meat, whose waste accounts for 30% and 20% respectively.

By taking a more holistic approach to measuring carbon footprint of livestock farming, the emissions from ruminants are likely to be mitigated and we get a better understanding of how sustainable meat production truly is. It is also significant that the AHDB are an evidence-based organisation, so are committed to only reporting factually accurate information. Many of the sources promoting a reduction in meat consumption are not restricted by such guidelines, so have the freedom to make exaggerated claims that appear more extreme than the facts.

Q: Can you explain in more detail how livestock farming can have a positive impact on the environment?

Carbon Sequestration - The soil is alive with micro-organisms and when plants take carbon from the air, as well as for their own growth, they use it in a symbiotic relationship to feed the soil microbes in exchange for nutrients and other ecological functions. Plants do this by releasing exudates via their roots in the form of many different carbon compounds. Organic matter from the biomass of plant roots as they grow and die, plant matter trodden into the soil by grazing cows, along with the manure they leave behind, all adds carbon (and other nutrients), which the microbes ultimately convert into complex and very stable carbon compounds called humus. Each time a cow takes a bite of grass it triggers the plant to release exudates in order to receive in return the nutrients needed for rapid regrowth.

The grass's rate of photosynthesis goes up, more grass (biomass) is grown and more carbon is removed from the air and pushed down into the soil. The action of grazing repeatedly pushes the grass back into its growth stage and as long as grass is actively growing, carbon is being removed from the atmosphere and sequestered into the ground.

Preventing topsoil depletion - In the UK, topsoil depletion is so severe that in 2014 the trade magazine Farmers Weekly announced we may have only 100 harvests left. Letting arable land lie fallow and returning it to grazed pasture for a period – as farmers used to, before artificial fertilisers and mechanisation made continuous cropping possible – is the only way to reverse that process, halting erosion and rebuilding soil, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. It also helps to return nutrients to the soil, known as nutrient recycling.

Sustainable food source - Only ruminants are able to transform grass and forage land into food for us, such as dairy and meat, and there is a large amount of marginal grassland which can't be used for anything other than livestock grazing. From Wales to the Scottish Highlands, there are many upland areas in Britain unsuitable for growing crops but perfect for allowing livestock to graze. The soil will be able to hold huge amounts of water and provide flood protection for lower lying areas. And, when the farmers are making a living by selling milk and meat from their grass-fed animals, there is a perfect cycle of sustainability: good for the soil, good for the environment, cattle with a good life, producing healthy food for us.

Flood protection – When managed effectively, marginal grasslands can act as the perfect sink for water, providing flood protection for lower lying areas. These sinks can also feed into the water supply, helping to supply water for consumption to large city populations.

Biodiversity – Livestock grazing is crucial to encouraging and maintaining biodiversity. Without maintaining a low level of grazing across grasslands, species-rich grasslands are replaced by taller, wild grasslands with lower species diversity. This was demonstrated when agricultural subsidies transitioned to area payments, leaving much grassland unmanaged, and resulting in a sharp decrease in biodiversity.

Social and economic benefit to rural communities – Livestock farming can provide vital social and economic benefits to rural communities, such as food supply, source of income, source of employment etc.

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